

probable ultimate racial effects of the war on the nation are clearly indicated, and with nearly all that is stated in this chapter I find myself in agreement. When he draws a distinction between hereditary qualities of a fluctuational character and those in which true Mendelian phenomena appear (p. 214), he appears to me to be on questionable ground, and the hope—it is but a hope—here expressed, that certain hereditary defects encouraged by the war “may work out slowly,” may prove to be illusory. He points out truly and courageously that “the voluntary restriction of births is chiefly responsible for the number of families who are now mourning the loss of only sons” (p. 221), and this remark leads on to a discussion of the methods of combating the evil consequences of birth control. The wise caution is given that “if the State decides to subsidise the production of children, it must, as in other cases, take the common-sense precaution of seeing that the goods are delivered” (p. 223), and the risk is pointed out that if we “merely stimulate production in the lowest paid class,” the result may be that “the hereditary aptitudes of the skilled artisan and the professional man will tend to be swamped even more than they are at present” (p. 225). Scholarships are discussed as a help to the better-off classes, but the probability “of obtaining such help is too incalculable to act as a motive for parenthood” (p. 226). The necessity of promoting improvements in environment is wisely insisted upon, independently of any racial effects; but I wish I could completely share in the author’s confidence that the result of such reforms is usually to give “to the best hereditary stock a favourable soil in which to increase and multiply” (p. 233). A complete change is needed in the point of view from which these questions should be regarded may be said to sum up the author’s conclusions on these topics, and this conclusion we shall all endorse.

Our readers’ attention should, in conclusion, be especially directed to the discussion of the reform of the income tax in the last chapter, the changes desirable with a view to racial benefits being here worked out far more carefully and systematically than in any other publication known to me.

LEONARD DARWIN.

Bigelow, MAURICE P. *Sex Education*. The Macmillan Company; 1916; pp. 247; price 5s. 6d.

FOR the last few years Professor Bigelow has been giving lectures on sex education and on the biologic aspects of sex, along with his academic courses in biology at Columbia University. He has also had unusual opportunities of addressing parents and other groups of men and women upon the social need. These lectures have formed the basis of this volume, which constitutes a most valuable survey of the task of sex education.

The whole is illuminated by a thorough grasp of the personal problem, such as can only be gathered from the people themselves, and is evidently inspired by a knowledge of the social and racial problems which we are setting out to solve. Professor Bigelow realises the dimensions and the intricacies of the problem, but does not urge the average student to probe deeply into the social evils; he regards a limited reading in this direction as being sufficient for one who is not engaged in medical or social work, but urges a thorough study and appreciation of sex as a constructive force. He writes very wisely on the subject of literature dealing with sex, pointing out how a keen discrimination must be exercised in directing the reading both of the student and of young people. Such reading should be done openly, not in an atmosphere of secrecy; the study of sex must be brought into the light of day. Parents and competent teachers should in this, as in other fields of juvenile interest, be ready to guide and to share. Professor Bigelow has a very wise word to say on the value of *books* as contrasted with *pamphlets*.

We agree with him entirely when he says: "At present there are no thoroughly satisfactory books for adolescent boys and girls."

Under the heading "Problems for Sex Education" the author discusses personal sex hygiene, social diseases, prostitution, illegitimacy, social morality, sexual vulgarity, marriage and eugenics. Then he proceeds to deal with organisation of educational attack upon the sex problems, identifying the part to be played by the home, the school, the social and religious environment of young people, and the needs of young people themselves at different stages in life. No attempt is made to outline a definite scheme: this volume is more for the purpose of informing custodians of child life, of the nature of the task which lies before them. It is not to be expected in so controversial a subject that one will find oneself in absolute agreement with every detail, nor even perhaps entirely with the broad issues. This book is written by an American primarily for Americans, and is consequently characterised by a freedom of discussion which we in this country are just beginning to attain, and shall be the better for when we attain it in the same intellectual, dignified spirit which characterises Dr. Bigelow's writing. We earnestly recommend all students in social betterment and in child welfare, whether in the educational or other professions, to make a deep study of this work.

NORAH MARCH.

Scharlieb, MARY, M.S., M.D. *The Hidden Scourge*. C. Arthur Pearson, Ltd.; 1916; pp. 96; price 1s.

NO one of marriageable age has the right to remain ignorant, in these days, of the menace to our national life, both in its physical and moral aspects, caused by the venereal infections. But much of the mass of literature on this subject which followed on the issue of the Final Report of the Royal Commission on Venereal Diseases was calculated to do harm rather than good, ill-informed writers erring either on the side of exaggeration or depreciation of the evil.

The real need was for a sober, sane and authoritative statement of facts, and this Mrs. Scharlieb has supplied in the present volume, which contains all that the average man and woman need and ought to know of the origin, remedies and results of venereal diseases. The prevailing ignorance as to the last of these three has perhaps been the most potently disastrous factor in keeping both the national and the individual conscience comfortably asleep, but this simple and straightforward account of how "the evil that men do lives after them" as well as with them, should leave no room for further sloth in either direction. Even when divested of all hysterical and alarmist colouring the story is as grim a one of national peril and threatening national disaster as any to be found in historical records of the past, the more so as its insidiousness robs it of that spectacular element which has often proved the rallying point for a fight and victory.

For once in a way the hackneyed phrase that "this book should be in every household" represents a genuine fact.

N. A.

Downward Paths. An inquiry into the causes which contribute to the making of the prostitute. London: Bell; 1916; pp. 200; price 2s. 6d. net.

A SANE and most restrained account of a subject as unpleasant as important. Published under a trust the several writers who have contributed to produce it desire that their names should remain unknown. Fortunately, "they are women," and so we escape that suggestion of sex prejudice which is urged so often to minimise efforts to advance any argument regarding the causation of prostitution other than the excessive original sin of "man," as distinct from the virginal innocence of "woman." Dealing with the histories of 830 women, the alleged cause of the lapse of 669 is tabulated and then discussed in nine chapters.